

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes April 15, 2015

Present: Jan Derry, Chair
Fran Whiteman
Mike Fike
Don Spencer, Secretary

Tim Hairston – Liaison/ State HRC
Aaron Kapansky - Research Intern

Meeting called to order by Jan Derry, Chair, at 6:30 p.m. On personnel matters, Mike Fike indicated that when he completes his term on City Council, he will be resigning as a member of all commissions including the Human Rights Commission. He noted that he had been appointed to the HR Commission before being elected as a councilor and is not completely clear about his future status will be.

Don Spencer announced that Bob Jones has resigned as a volunteer with the Commission after 20 months of excellent service as a research consultant, member of the Diversity Representation Committee and a facilitator of the recent Town Hall Meeting. It was also noted that it is believed that Anne Marie Lofaso's three year term as well as the similar terms of Mike Fike and Don Spencer will be completed for in June. Jan Derry agreed to check with City Clerk to determine the current status of all Commission membership.

Public Session: No public session attendees were present.

Communications: Jan Derry reported on the three day visit of Department of Justice representative to gather information pertaining to a current case pending with developers in Morgantown. She also provided an overview on the State Human Rights Conference on Fair Housing scheduled for the following day (April 16) at the Waterfront Hotel.

Don Spencer and Tim Hairston provided a report on the two-day State HRC conference conducted at Stonewall on March 26, 27. Spencer's particular emphasis was on Barbara Fleischauer's legislative report and the need for state wide communication among human rights and social justice organizations.

Spencer also provided a summary of a current report on hate groups active in the Sate of WV.

Jan Derry provided an overview of plans for the ADA Bus visit scheduled on Saturday, May 2 at the NVCIL offices on Brockway Ave. She also emphasized the connection between civil rights and the rights of persons with disabilities. In addition she reported on the meeting held on March 26 to discuss strategy for address needs of the homeless. The overall local emphasis will be on Housing First, but there will still need to be a need for a day center as well. Eliminating houselessness for veterans is a local priority for 2015.

Minutes: On a motion by Fran Whiteman, seconded by Mike Fike, the minutes of the March 19, 2015 meeting were approved as presented. Don Spencer stated that a digital copy will be forwarded to each Commissioner.

Priority Items: Jan Derry and Don Spencer reported on the Town Hall Meeting event conducted at the Marilla Center on March 25. Sixty persons attended and reports about the actions of each of the four planning groups were discussed as well as information received on the Feed Back Sheets form participants. Reports on the flip-chart information were not available, but the information will be forwarded as soon as it is received from each group leader. Jan Derry emphasized the importance of doing follow-up communication for all participants to encourage participants to provide corrections and additional information as well.

Jan Derry announced that the housing program for landlords planned for April 23 on service and support animals will be held at the Marilla Center. This event is being co-sponsored by the City HRC.

No progress report was available on the installation of the 24/7 human rights line. The Commission did review once again the script for the phone answering and referral service.

The civil right history course planning was discussed favorably, but the resolution format proposed for implementation was considered no longer viable. Another recommendation is needed from Brian Jara which will keep the HRC involved in the implementation process. Coloring books for younger ages were shared from the State Conference.

Aaron Kapansky offered to make a list of civil rights courses offered at WVU.

Progress Reports: Fran Whiteman has prepared a draft for job descriptions for LGBT liaisons with the City Manager and Chief of Police offices. A discussion followed as to whether these positions will be paid or volunteer positions. It was agreed that the positions would likely be volunteer positions in as much as no persons are known to be currently employed who might qualify. Fran and Don Spencer agreed to meet before the next HRC meeting to rework the position descriptions.

With Dave Bott unable to attend the meeting, the Commission did not confirm their financial status for the next fiscal year.

In the absence of Marlene Robinson-Savino, Don Spencer reported on the 10 projects projected by the Committee for the completion of an update of the City's EEOC plan. He pointed out that the Commission is very fortunate to have the support of research intern Aaron Kapansky and the WVU Affirmative Action office under the director of Franklin Hairston as resources for working on the list of projects. Tim Hairston pointed out that the State EEOC office in Charleston might be a helpful resource as well. Aaron Kapansky brought forward a copy of the most recent City of Morgantown Affirmative Action Plan which he has located to-date. It is dated 1984 and includes in its title the words "Section 3".

Don Spencer announced that David Fryson has appointed Bruce Mitchell and Sharon Mallow to work with the Annual Human Rights Film Festival. Endowment interest funds become available for the program July 1.

New Business: The Commission reviewed its goals and resources for 2015. Its top priority is following up on the Town Hall Meeting while keeping progress continuing on other projects.

Regular Meeting Items: The Commission reviewed the calendar of observances for April and May. As a result a discrepancy was identified as far as determining when Holocaust Day occurs: January 27 or April 16? Aaron Kapansky agreed to research the situation so that the Commission can place a single event on the local Commission calendar.

It was agreed that the next regular meeting of the Commission will be held on the regular monthly meeting date: the third Thursday – May 21 at the regular meeting site – the conference room in the Public Safety Building at 6:30 p.m.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.